

REMARKS

Applicant submits this Response in response to the Office Action mailed December 15, 2006. Applicant has cancelled claims 20-23, 25-29, 33-34 and 36-38, amended claims 24 and 35, and added new claims 42-57. Claims 24, 30-32, 35 and 39-57 are now pending. No new matter has been added.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the indication in paragraphs 8-9 of the Office Action that claims 30-32¹ and 39-41 are allowed, and claims 24 and 35 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicant has amended claims 24 and 35 to include all of the limitations of their independent base claims, and therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner indicate the allowance of claims 24 and 35 as well.

In paragraphs 2-7 of the Office Action, the Examiner has: rejected claims 20, 23 and 29 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,385,191 to Coffman et al ("Coffman"); rejected claims 21, 22, 26, 28, 37 and 38 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Coffman; and rejected claims 25, 33 and 34 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Coffman in view of U.S. Patent 5,809,128 to McMullin ("McMullin"). As Applicant has cancelled claims 20-23, 25-29, 33-34 and 36-38, the rejections of these claims is now moot.²

Applicant submits new claims 42-57 in this Response. Claims 42-57 are supported by the specification as filed (see, for example, col. 9, lines 40-47, col. 10, lines 34-67, and col. 11, lines 1-54). Applicant believes claims 42-57 to be patentable over the prior art of record, and respectfully requests indication by the Examiner of the allowability of claims 42-57.

¹ Applicant notes that the Examiner did not address claims 31 and 32 in the Office Action. However, since claims 31 and 32 are dependent from claim 30, Applicant interprets the Examiner's indication of the allowability of claim 30 to also indicate the allowability of claims 31 and 32.

² Applicant's silence as to assertions made by the Examiner or requirements applicable to such assertions (e.g., assertions as to dependent or cancelled claims, whether a reference constitutes prior art, whether references are legally combinable) is not a concession by Applicant that such assertions are accurate or such requirements have been met, and Applicant reserves the right to analyze and dispute such in the future.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully submits that the pending claims are in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested. If there are any outstanding issues which need to be resolved to place the application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's undersigned representative by phone at the number indicated below to discuss such issues. To the extent necessary, a petition for extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 is hereby made, the fee for which should be charged to deposit account number 07-2347. With respect to this application, please charge any other necessary fees and credit any overpayment to that account.

Respectfully submitted,

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